

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A laces tying device for laces extending along a laced structure in a first direction, comprising a body provided with one or more apertures adapted to receive the lace with which the device is used and provided with readily releasable fastening means adapted to fasten the lace in the one or more apertures and clip means comprising a retaining arm extending parallel to the first direction and mounted on a spring-loaded hinge provided on the outer surface of the body, said hinge biasing the arm towards the outer surface of the body and the retaining arm being arranged to retain overlapping portions of the lace which, in use, extend from the one or more apertures.

2. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which the one or more apertures are intersected by a passage, the readily releasable fastening means comprising a spring-loaded clamping element.

3. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 2, in which the clamping element is provided with one or more apertures provided in the body.

4. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 3, in which the clamping element is biased in one direction of displacement so that the one or more apertures provided in the clamping element are normally out of alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

5. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 4, in which the clamping element is provided with a trigger, the operation of which displaces the clamping element to bring the one or more apertures provided in the

clamping element into alignment with the one or more apertures provided in the body.

6. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which two apertures are provided in the body, through which the opposite ends of the lace can be threaded.

7. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 6, in which the retaining arm is provided with lace-engaging elements on its underside.

8. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 7, in which the lace engaging elements comprise elongate projections.

9. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 8, in which six elongate projections are provided.

10. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 9, in which the elongate projections extend from the underside of the arm towards the hinge at an angle of less than 90 degrees.

11. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 7, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

12. (currently amended) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 11, in which ~~the~~ lace engaging elements are

provided in the body are formed by a roughened or corrugated surface portion.

13.. (previously presented) A laces tying device according to claim 1, further provided with a display portion.

14. (previously presented) A laces tying device according to claim 13, in which the display portion is adapted to display any one of a number of selectable display elements.

15. (previously presented) A laces tying device as claimed in claim 1, in which the tying device is dimensioned for use with footwear provided with laces.

16. (previously presented) An article provided with a fastening using laces and further provided with a laces tying device according to claim 1.

17. (original) A method of using a laces tying device according to claim 1, the method including the steps of:

(a) operating the releasable fastening means and threading the two opposite ends of the lace through the one or more body apertures, then applying the fastening means to fasten the ends of the lace;

(b) arranging the lace ends extending from the one or more body apertures parallel to one another;

(c) overlapping the lace ends at a point approximately half way along their lengths;

(d) opening the clip means and placing the point of overlap of the lace ends under the retaining arm; and

(e) closing the retaining arm onto the point of overlap of the laces.

18. (currently amended) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 8, in which ~~the~~ lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

19. (previously presented) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 9, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.

20. (previously presented) The laces tying device as claimed in claim 10, in which the lace engaging elements are provided on the outer surface of the body, adjacent the lace engaging elements provided on the arm.